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The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/56/L.45

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

Summary

As indicated in section III of the present statement, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/56/L.45 an additional appropriation of $188,500 would be required under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

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I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-fifth session, the General Assembly authorized the continuation of the provision of resources for two staff (1 at the P-4 level and 1 at the General Service level) for 2001 in support of the Central American peace process pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/178. The current proposals reflect the maintenance in 2002 of those resources authorized for 2001.

II. Draft resolution A/56/L.45

A. Request contained in the draft resolution

2. By operative paragraphs 11 and 19 of draft resolution A/56/L.45, the General Assembly would:

(a) Request the Secretary-General, the bodies and programmes of the United Nations system and the international community to continue to support and verify in Guatemala the implementation of all the peace agreements signed under United Nations auspices, compliance with which is an essential condition for a firm and lasting peace in that country, and to consider the implementation of the Peace Agreements as the framework for their technical and financial assistance programmes and projects, stressing the importance of constant and close cooperation among them in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Guatemala;

(b) Request the Secretary-General to continue to lend his full support to the initiatives and activities of Central American Governments, particularly their efforts to consolidate peace and democracy through the promotion of integration and the implementation of the comprehensive sustainable development programme, emphasizing, inter alia, the potential repercussions of natural disasters, in particular the persisting effects of hurricane Mitch, for the peace processes and the vulnerable economies of the region, and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session on the implementation of the resolution.

B. Relationship of the proposed request to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005

3. The above request relates to subprogramme 1.1, Prevention, control and resolution of conflicts, of programme 1, Political affairs, of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 (A/55/6/Rev.1).

C. Activities by which the proposed request would be implemented

4. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would, with respect to the requests outlined in paragraph 2 above:

(a) Continue to provide good offices, as required, as well as substantive support and political guidance, to the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) in the fulfilment of its mandate;

(b) Continue to follow up pending issues related to the peace agenda in El Salvador, in full cooperation with the United Nations resident coordinator for El Salvador, who is also the representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the area;

(c) Continue to lend full support to the initiatives and activities of the Central American Governments, particularly in their efforts to consolidate peace and democracy.

D. Requirements at full cost

5. Post-conflict peace-building is at the core of the activities performed by the Department of Political Affairs, and by the United Nations at large, with regard to Central America. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central America (A/56/416), the United Nations continues to play an active role in the peace process of Central America.

6. The destruction caused by hurricane Mitch in October 1998 required a comprehensive approach to recovery so as to address the underlying structural problems that exacerbated the impact of that natural disaster. The Department of Political Affairs will continue to follow that process closely to ensure that the reconstruction/transformation efforts after

hurricane Mitch and subsequent natural disasters contribute to the consolidation of peace and development in the Central American region.

7. The Peace Agreements signed in Guatemala in 1996 provided the basis for a multifaceted mandate entrusted by the General Assembly to the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala, namely verification, good offices, advisory services and public information. MINUGUA has also played a leading role, together with the other parts of the United Nations system and the international community at large, in a multifaceted exercise in peace-building.

8. In El Salvador, the Department of Political Affairs remains committed to the consolidation of the peace-building process, in full cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its task of assisting the Government of El Salvador in the final implementation of the pending issues of the 1992 Peace Agreements.

9. In order to provide adequate support to all the Secretary-General's efforts in Central America, particularly in Guatemala, the Secretariat will need resources to continue financing a Professional (P-4 level) and a General Service position.

10. The Political Affairs Officer (P-4) would be primarily assigned to monitor the Guatemalan peace process and to provide backstopping and political guidance to MINUGUA post-conflict peace-building activities. When necessary, that Officer would also follow up operational, personnel and financial matters pertaining to MINUGUA. In addition, the Officer would brief and distribute information to missions, academic institutions and NGOs currently interested in the Guatemala peace process.

11. Regarding El Salvador, the Political Affairs Officer would assist in the joint UNDP/Department of Political Affairs follow-up programme to ensure compliance with issues still pending from the 1992 Peace Agreement. In addition, the Officer would brief and distribute information to missions, academic institutions and NGOs currently interested in the El Salvador peace process.

12. In the case of Central America, the Political Affairs Officer would follow developments in the region as a whole. When necessary, the Officer would attend meetings of the United Nations inter-agency task force for the reconstruction and transformation of Central America, and would coordinate activities with field offices of the United Nations system, as appropriate.

13. The General Service staff member would provide research assistance, administrative backstopping and secretarial support for the above-mentioned activities.

14. The estimated costs related to the salaries and common staff costs of the staff indicated in paragraph 9 above would amount to $188,500.

III. Action required from the General Assembly

15. The General Assembly, in its resolution 55/233 of 23 December 2000, decided that a provision of $93,691,600 should be included for special political missions. As described in paragraph 3.46 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/56/6 (Sect. 3)), the utilization of the provision of $93,691,600 for political missions would be subject to individual legislative mandates and approval by the General Assembly, as and when the Security Council and/or the General Assembly establish or renew the mandates of such missions.

16. **Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/56/L.45, the requirements of $188,500 would be charged against the provision for special political missions requested in section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003.**